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**From:**  
**Sent:** 07 November 2022 08:35  
**To:** Planning Comments (SMDC)  
**Subject:** Comment Received from Public Access

**Categories:**

Application Reference No. : SMD/2022/0444 Site Address: Land East of Cellarhead Substation and West of Rownall Road Wetley Rocks Staffordshire Comments by: Mark Johnson Moorlands Climate Action

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Submission: Support  
Comments:

The Planning Committee has overwhelmingly and unequivocally voiced in favour of the principle of the previous application at this site (SMD 2021/0695), despite the substantial hurdles that so rightly protect the Green Belt.

The previous application was refused solely for reasons of landscaping, with a clear message sent from the committee that should the applicants return with an appropriate redesign this would likely pass.

We suggest that the applicants have fully taken note of this and responded accordingly; the permanent landscape impairments identified in the Conservation officer's report now range from minor to negligible; taken together with the very sensible planning conditions suggested in section 9 of his report they provide the grounds for approval of this application and delivery of the committee's previously expressed desires.

In stating their previous approval in principle in June this year, committee members went against the recommendation of the Planning Officer, one of whose key objections centred around the question of 'why here, and not elsewhere?'

While that question has already been answered to the satisfaction of the Committee, we suggest that the applicant has returned to this issue of location in a remarkably effective manner.

In their Planning Statement (sections 5 and 6 and passim) the applicant has comprehensively provided further evidence to remove any lingering doubts as to why battery storage needs to be at Cellarhead.

Because of the overwhelming nature of this evidence (and the previous decision) we do not propose to rehearse in detail all of the arguments that Moorlands Climate Action advanced both in writing and in person with regard to the previous submission.

We simply add that since that previous decision, the reasons for increased energy security at home have become even more compelling.

Increased flexibility in the electricity supply system (including battery storage) is central to achieving this goal.

MCA takes part in the regular seminars held by National Grid ESO on the future of the system and can testify to the remarkable amount and pace of work being done across the country to achieve this goal, alongside that of hitting the country's legally binding emissions targets under the Climate Act 2008.

For the Moorlands not to play its part, or indeed, reap the benefits of this journey would be unconscionable.

While the Planning Committee is not an executive arm of the council, we regard the clear decision in favour of the principle of battery storage at Cellarhead (whilst adhering to national and local planning guidelines) as evidence of a renewed seriousness towards the council's own Climate Agenda.

We note that after the original decision, the Planning Department felt it necessary to hold a session for councillors on the principles of the Green Belt and this despite constant complaints that department is stripped bare of resources and the painful and public acknowledgement that it has effectively lost control of the housing supply element of the Local Plan.

We respect the body of expertise located in the Planning Department but equally respectfully suggest that if there is one element of planning already engraved on members' hearts it is the Green Belt and that the scarce resources of the department might better be deployed other than in a rear-guard action against renewable energy.

We renew MCA's suggestion (informally supported in conversations with Cabinet Members) that all major applications are referred to the SMDC Climate Officer for opinion in the same manner as is done for other internal and external bodies.

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